

Spring 2021

Professor José Lanfers

Course Description

In this class we will explore the mode(s) of writing broadly referred to as fabulism and magical realism, through the lens of a range of narrative texts by writers from Britain, elsewhere in Europe, and Latin America. The boundaries between modern fable, contemporary fairy tale, and magical realism “proper” are not easy to draw, and definitions are elusive. In such texts, what seems recognizably realistic, familiar, and rational merges with or includes the inexplicable in the form of fabulous or fantastical occurrences more often encountered in myth or dream. Such texts often include elements of allegory and metafiction, and frequently use techniques associated with postmodernist or postcolonial discourse. Stories (tales) and novels from different regions and with a variety of emphases will allow us to explore the contexts, boundaries, definitions, and manifestations of fabulist writing, including magical realism.

Reading List

A.S. Byatt, *The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye* (Vintage)
Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths* (New Directions)
Italo Calvino, *The Nonexistent Knight and The Cloven Viscount* (Harvest)
Angela Carter, *The Magic Toyshop* and *Burning Your Boats* (Penguin)
Günter Grass, *The Tin Drum* (Mariner)
Doris Lessing, *The Memoirs of a Survivor* (Vintage)
Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (HarperPerennial)
Cees Nooteboom, *In the Dutch Mountains* (Harvest)
Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (Random)
Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion* and *Sexing the Cherry* (Grove)

Background reading:

Maggie Ann Bowers, *Magic(al) Realism* (Routledge)
Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (Routledge).